

# Timp path began hike to popularity 85 years ago

BYU instructor led trip in 1912 that thousands from around globe now travel.

By Edward L. Carter  
Deseret News staff writer

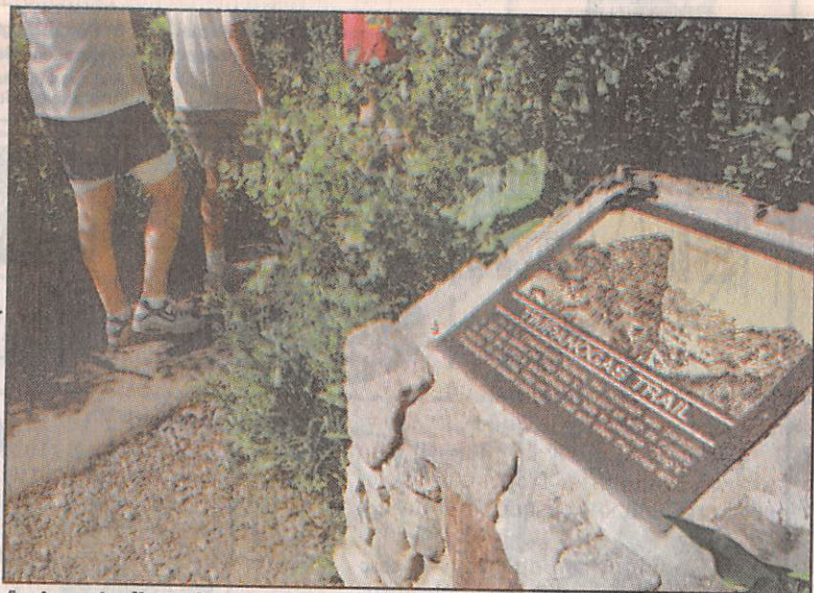
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PROVO — If mountains can have birthdays, Utah County's Mount Timpanogos — or at least the popularity of hiking it — turns 85 years old this month.

Of course, the mountain is actually millions of years older than that. But it was exactly 85 years ago that Eugene L. Roberts, director of physical education at Brigham Young University, introduced Timpanogos to the world.

In July 1912, Roberts led a group of 22 BYU students and teachers on a three-day excursion that took them to the summit of the 11,750-foot peak. The Timpanogos Hike became an annual event that drew thousands of hikers from around the globe.

Today, Roberts' legacy thrives in connection with the mountain he loved. Thousands of hikers each



A stone trail marker, although misspelling Timpanogos, touts the popular hike of Mount Timpanogos that was first traveled in 1912.

summer — although no longer on a single day — continue to make the pilgrimage to the great outdoor shrine.

The man who would take on the nickname "Timp" recalled that the original hike was "... enthusiastically received by everybody except those who were frankly skeptical about its safety and also its social value."

Despite the doubters, Roberts and 21 others piled their provi-

sions and themselves into two wagons for the daylong trip from Provo to the area of present-day Sundance Resort in the north fork of Provo Canyon.

"From this point the First Annual Timpanogos Hike began the following day," Roberts later wrote. "It required nearly eight hours to reach (the summit) since there were no real trails up the

## HIKE

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mountain side, and much of the distance led through dense underbrush."

Roberts later introduced a campfire program, fireworks, Timpanogos songs, surprise stunts along the trail and open-air dramatic performances in connection with the annual hike. Although his hopes for a Passion Play-like mountain pageant never came to fruition and the hike was discontinued in 1970, Roberts was remarkably prescient.

"There is no way of predicting (the hike's) future, but one thing is sure, it is worthwhile, and has contributed and will continue to contribute much toward the richness of Utah community recreational life," he said before his death in 1953.

A plaque on a stone marker at the Aspen Grove trail head notes that Roberts was the one who popularized the mountain. And a peak north of the Timpanogos summit, called Roberts' Horn, bears the name of the BYU athletic instructor.

Mount Timpanogos' popularity can be traced to a 1908 religious pilgrimage in Einsiedeln, Switzerland.

Roberts got the idea for a community hike after seeing the pilgrimage while serving as a missionary for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Europe. In June 1908, Roberts witnessed a procession of 5,000 Cath-

olics marching to worship at a shrine at the top of a hill in the Swiss Alps.

"In his mind, (Roberts) projected a mountain climb on Timpanogos, the huge 'sleeping woman in Utah County,' which should take on some of the religious character of the Swiss pilgrimages," according to a 1952 University of Utah master's thesis by Marva Hodson Gregory.

Four years after his moving experience in the Alps, Roberts' vision became reality. As the culmination of BYU's summer hiking program, Roberts led his first group to the summit of Timpanogos.

Roberts wasn't solely responsible for making the Timpanogos Hike what it became. Others had scaled the mountain before him, and there have been many since. But Roberts' relentlessness and originality in drawing people to Timpanogos stands out in the long history of what he called "Wonder Mountain."

Besides being an outdoorsman, Roberts was a basketball, football, gymnastics and track coach, poet, journalist, professor, orator and lover of jokes.

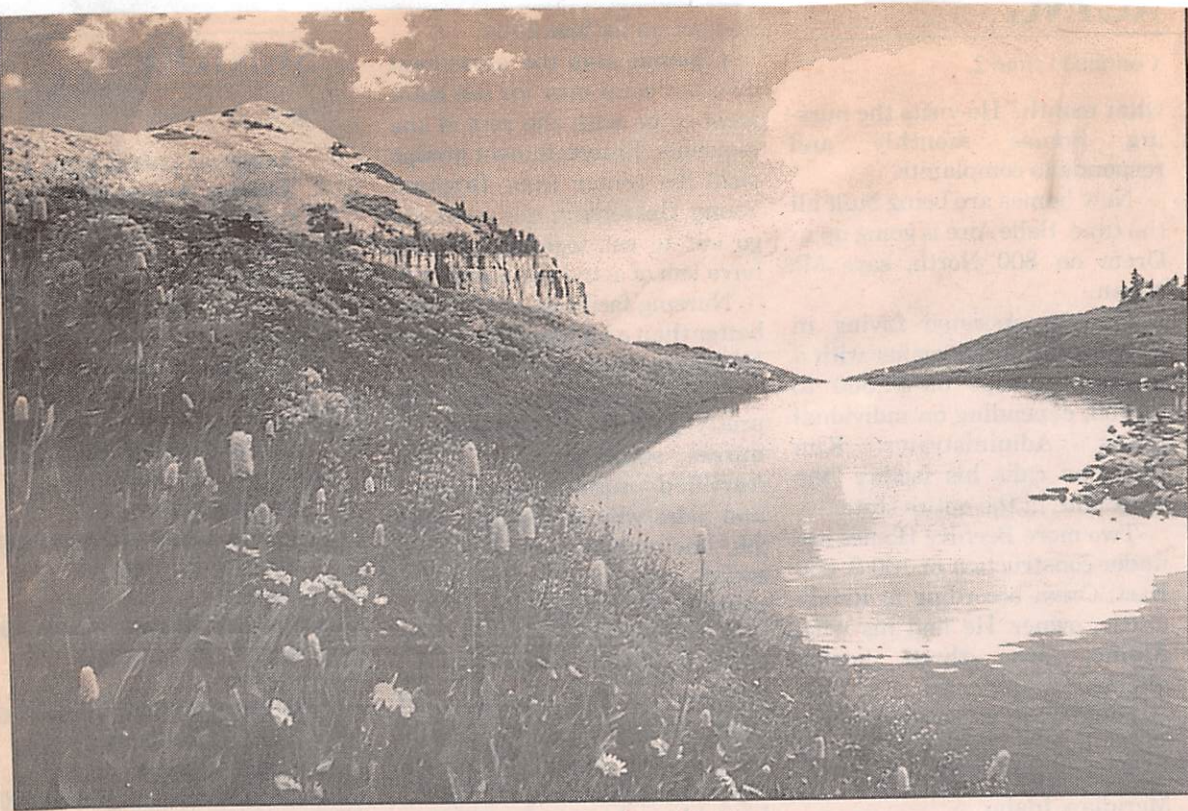
He sandwiched nearly two decades of coaching and teaching at BYU between a short stint at Yale University and a distinguished career at the University of Southern California. The same month Roberts started the Timpanogos Hike, July 1912, a high jumper trained by Roberts, Alma Richards, won an Olympic gold medal in Stockholm, Sweden.

Although he was successful in a

wide range of activities, Roberts will always be remembered most for his love affair with Timpanogos. He never deviated from his original aim to make hiking Timpanogos a religious experience.

Before one of the annual Timpanogos hikes, Roberts advised hikers, "Prepare to remain on the mountain until late afternoon. Many people hurry up and then hurry back. This is a mistake. When going through heaven, take it easy."





**Shining sight:** Clouds reflect off Emerald Lake, located on Mt. Timpanogos.

## 77-year-old Springville resident still takes on Timp

By **JOHN BEST**  
Herald Correspondent

**SPRINGVILLE** — Hiking the steep trails leading to the summit of Mt. Timpanogos takes stamina, but according to 77-year-old Cleo Bishop, "It's not really too hard."

Not too hard? The fact is there are folks half her age who quail at the very thought of the steep hike that takes a long day for most people to complete.

But this avid Springville hiker says, "It's beautiful and inspiring and worth every step." She reached the summit when she was 74 and again

when she was 75, but took her 76th year off because of a sore knee.

Last weekend she was back on the trail creating more memories with her family. She says, "I'm so glad I went again this year. The flowers were just beautiful and we saw a big bull moose on the Timpooneke Trail — that was exciting. And the hummingbirds, too, were so beautiful." Cleo adds hiking helps her feel love for the earth and its beauty.

A complete round-trip hike to the summit is approximately 20 miles. This year Cleo hiked a 15-mile segment from the Timpooneke Trailhead to

Emerald Lake (7.5 miles) and back down the Aspen Grove Trail (6.9 miles).

### Not in a hurry

To reach the spectacular alpine meadow at 10,800 feet requires a climb of 4,000 feet from the trailhead. From there it's another 1,000 feet to the summit. Average hiking time to the meadow is five hours. Cleo made it in six, but adds, "I wasn't in any hurry, I was just enjoying the hike and the great friendship from everyone else on the trail."

The grandma remembers

See **CLEO**, 5



Courtesy photo

**Nature's wonder:** Scenery along the hike to the top of Mt. Timpanogos.

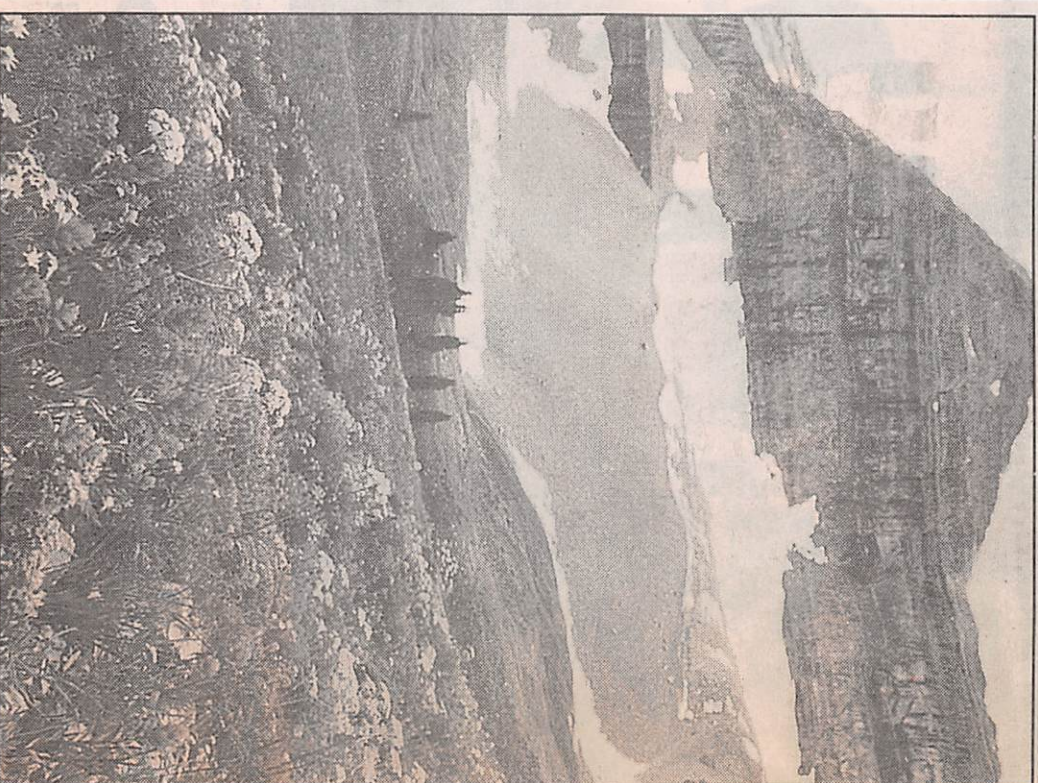


# Climbing onward



**Still climbing:** Cleo Bishop, 77, of Springville, stands just below the summit of Mt. Timpanogos, near Emerald Lake.

Courtesy photo



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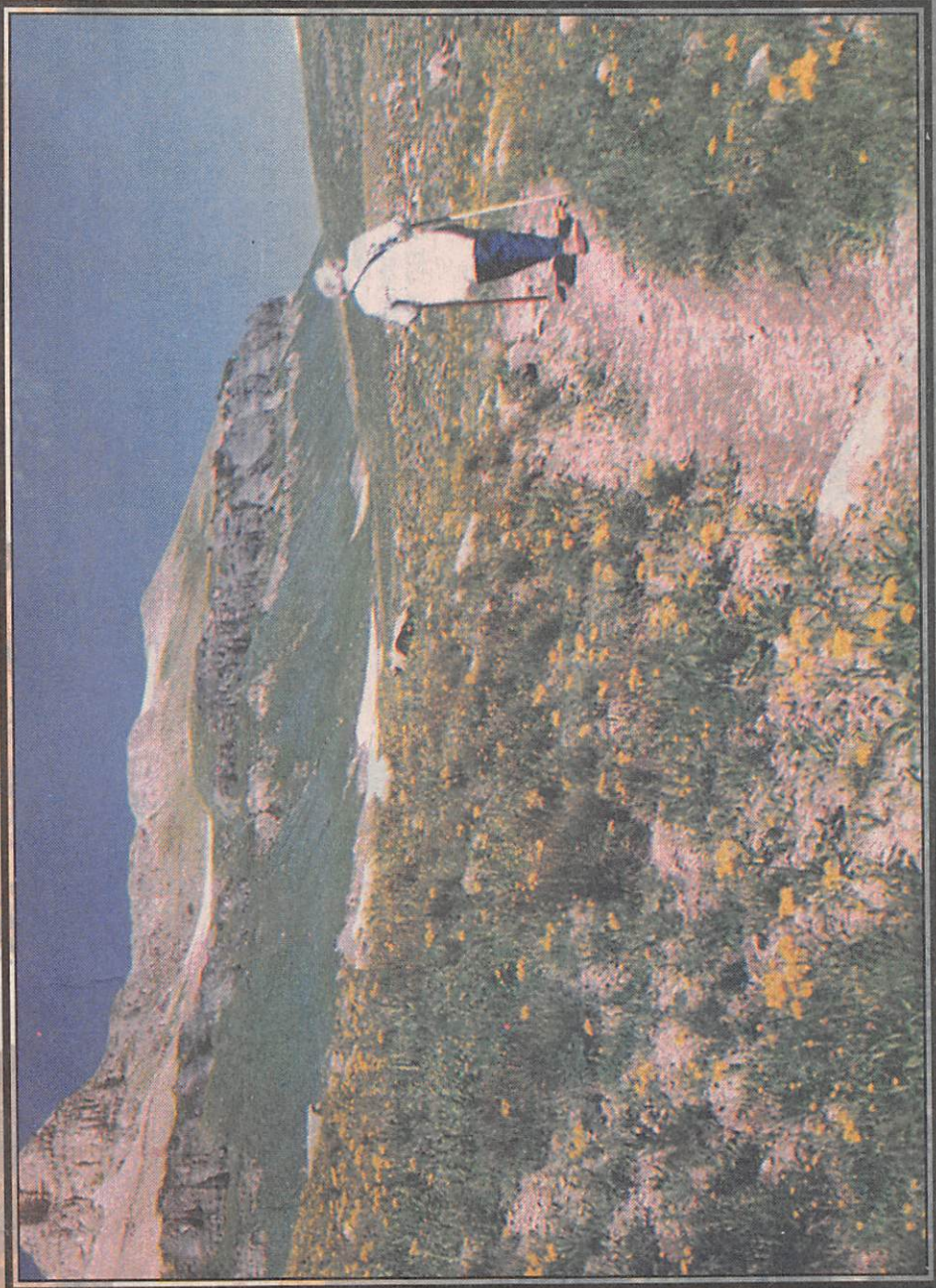
**Colorful hike:** Wildflowers found along the Timpanogos trail.



# Still Active

Springville  
woman keeps  
on course,  
climbing Mt.  
Timpanogos.

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